



Knowledge, evidence
and learning for
development

The bottom billion in Africa: poverty trends and forecasts

Huma Haider

Independent consultant

20 November 2020

Question

Where is poverty most concentrated in Africa? Which sub-regions and countries have the highest rates? How is this being impacted by COVID-19 and climate change? What will it look like by 2030?

Contents

1. Summary
2. Poverty trends
3. Poverty forecasts
4. References

The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.

Helpdesk reports are commissioned by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and other Government departments, but the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, the UK Government, K4D or any other contributing organisation. For further information, please contact helpdesk@k4d.info.

1. Summary

This rapid literature review explores poverty trends and forecasts in Africa, incorporating new forecasting stemming from the impacts of COVID-19. It draws in large part on a few rigorous studies published in very recent months, as the evolving pandemic and the effects of policies and interventions to address it have required continual updates in economic forecasts. The report focuses on extreme poverty¹ and also discusses multidimensional poverty.² While the literature surveyed provides some information of poverty trends at the sub-regional level in Africa, there is a lack of data on poverty levels and number of poor at the sub-regional level. Data primarily focuses on the continent as a whole or at the country level. Various country level statistics are presented in the Appendices. This report is a companion piece to K4D report no. 901: The bottom billion in Africa: group and sector-based inequalities.

Poverty trends

There has been tremendous progress in poverty reduction at a global scale since the 1990s. However, the sustained decline in extreme poverty began to slow from 2015 (World Bank, 2020). A key reason for the slowdown is the increasing concentration of extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which has been experiencing a slower reduction in poverty than other world regions (World Bank, 2020; Bicaba et al., 2017). About three in five of the world's poor are now living in Africa (see Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 34). Approximately 40 percent of the SSA population still lived in extreme poverty in 2018 (World Bank, 2020, 13). SSA also has the highest rate of multidimensional poverty, with 58 percent of the population considered to be multidimensionally poor (see Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 39; Tewolde & Weldeyohannes, 2018, 474). While the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) fare better than SSA in terms of the proportion of the extreme poor, there has been a recent rise in the extreme poverty rate in MENA, from 2.3 percent in 2013 to 7.2 percent in 2018, stemming from the conflicts in Syria and the Republic of Yemen (World Bank, 2020, 3).

Poverty rates are highest in the Sahel countries and the northern regions of the coastal West African countries, extending east into Ethiopia and southeast into the Congo Basin and its eastern surrounding regions in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). Poverty rates are generally much lower in the higher-income countries of southern Africa (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). Similarly, in terms of multi-dimensional poverty, East and Central Africa are considered the poorest regions, with 64 percent of people living in multidimensional poverty; whereas Southern Africa is the least poor, with only 8.6 percent of its population in multidimensional poverty (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 41-42).

The poverty-reducing effect of growth in SSA has been hampered by high inequality (income and gender) and the fact that the growth mostly depends on capital-intensive sectors like natural resource extraction, which is often not inclusive which needs time to reach the poor (Workneh,

¹ Income below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day.

² There is much debate about the way in which to measure poverty. See for example: M. Ravillion. *Debates on global poverty measures*. <https://economicsandpoverty.com/read/debates-on-global-poverty-measures/> and G. Demombynes (2010). *The multidimensional poverty index debate: rounds 2, 3, 4...* World Bank blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/the-multidimensional-poverty-index-debate-rounds-2-3-4>

2020; Bicaba et al., 2017). While resource-poor countries reduced poverty by 16 percentage points during 1995 – 2000, resource-rich countries recorded only a 7 percentage point reduction (Bicaba et al., 2016). Poverty in Africa is also largely concentrated in landlocked regions, mountainous regions, arid/semi-arid lands, and in rural areas (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019; Hulme & Lawson, 2017). Approximately four out of five of Africa's poor (82 percent) live in rural areas (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 40-41). In addition, poverty rates are particularly high in fragile states, where poverty decline is particularly slow (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019).

Poverty in Africa is both chronic and transitory (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). Some households experience welfare gains in some years but setbacks in other years, with different households moving in and out of poverty (Hill, 2019). The share of non-poor in Africa who fall into poverty is on average the same as the share of poor people who move out of poverty (Hill, 2019).

Three in five of Africa's poor are chronically poor, suggesting that poverty in Africa remains deeply structural (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). The depth of poverty in Africa is also more extreme. For those living below the poverty line in Africa, the average consumption level is only US\$.70 a day, considerably lower than levels in other regions that are all nearly approaching the \$1 a day level (Bhorat et al., 2016, 10).

The global poor remain predominantly rural, young and undereducated (World Bank, 2020; Hulme and Lawson, 2017). Child poverty is especially pervasive in Africa, with half of Africa's poor below the age of 15 (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 38). Most children live in larger households, which tend to be poorer (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). While there is evidence of multiple structural inequalities facing women relative to men in Africa, gender gaps in poverty are modest, with many female-headed households experiencing a decline in poverty at a rate faster than male-headed households (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). Poor people are considerably less educated, with two in five poor adults in Africa having no formal education (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). Many of the new poor, those affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 - are likely to be engaged in informal services, construction, and manufacturing (World Bank, 2020).

Poverty forecasts

According to World Bank estimates (prior to COVID-19), Africa's extreme poverty rate would be around 20 percent in 2030 and global poverty would become increasingly concentrated in Africa (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 33). While threats to poverty eradication goals emerged well before COVID-19, the pandemic and its associated economic crisis, alongside climate change and conflict, are reversing the gains in poverty reduction globally and in Africa (World Bank, 2020).

On a global scale, studies shows that the likely short-term impacts of climate change on poverty will result in an estimated additional 32 million to 132 million people in extreme poverty by 2030. (Jafino et al., 2020) This is of similar magnitude to the impacts of COVID-19, with an estimated additional 88 million to 115 million people in extreme poverty in 2020 (World Bank, 2020).

The projected poverty rates for 2020 are similar to those in 2017, indicating that the impacts of COVID-19 are expected to set back progress toward ending extreme poverty globally by at least three years (World Bank, 2020, 4-5). The population below the US\$3.20/day threshold may fall below the international poverty line because of the COVID-19 pandemic or other negative income shocks (World Bank, 2020). The negative effects of climate change on poverty are also likely to be concentrated among those whose incomes are not far above the poverty threshold (World Bank, 2020).

The World Bank's newly published forecasts (October 2020) of the pandemic's global poverty impacts through 2021 suggest that Sub-Saharan Africa will be the second most severely affected region (after South Asia), with 26 million to 40 million more of its population falling into extreme poverty (World Bank, 2020, 14-15). The COVID-19 crisis also threatens the food security and nutrition of millions of people, many of whom were already suffering (FAO, 2020).

Another recently published scenario analysis (October 2020) of the impact of COVID-19 in Africa finds that relative to the pre-COVID-19 Reference (or baseline) forecast, 14 million additional Africans will be extremely poor in 2020, with an additional 38 to 70 million more people classified as extremely poor in 2030. Whereas roughly 570 million Africans (33 percent of total population) would probably still live in extreme income poverty in 2030 in the Reference scenario, the impact of COVID-19 is to increase that number to between 607 million to 640 million, translating into poverty rates of 35-37 percent of Africa's total population (Cilliers et al., 2020, 2 and 16). The analysis finds that the countries that are most negatively affected are Nigeria, the DRC, Ethiopia, Niger and Tanzania (Cilliers et al., 2020).

Another recent study also projects that COVID-19 will produce a growth contraction in African economies, that could increase the poverty headcount for Africa as a whole to 35.85 percent for the the US\$1.90 poverty line, with significant variation across regions and countries (Diop and Asongu, 2020, 7).

The effects of COVID-19 is changing the composition of the poor in developing countries. Prior to the pandemic, fragile and conflict-affected economies were forecasted to represent the majority of the extreme poor by 2030, with Sub-Saharan Africa contributing a large share of the total (Corral et al., 2020; cited in World Bank, 2020). In the most recent COVID-19 projections, however, only 20 percent of the new poor are predicted to live in fragile and conflict-affected economies, indicating that FCAS may have a smaller share of the global poor in coming years compared to the share of the global poor that they have today (World Bank, 2020).

It is widely recognized that climate change will disproportionately affect poorer countries, and poorer individuals within countries, with Africa identified as the region most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (see Jafino et al., 2020; Serdeczny et al., 2017). Sub-Saharan Africa is the region where climate change is expected to push the most people into poverty. Under high climate change scenarios, under which there are greater impacts of climate change, the numbers of people pushed into extreme poverty in SSA are 39.7 million (Jafino et al., 2020, 5). SSA's already high rates of undernutrition and infectious disease can also be expected to increase compared to a scenario without climate change (Serdeczny et al., 2017). Particularly vulnerable are the rainfed agricultural systems on which the livelihoods of a large proportion of the region's population currently depend; and the pastoral systems of the drylands of the Sahel that are heavily dependent on natural resources (Serdeczny et al., 2017). Growing risks to agricultural livelihoods is expected to increase the rate of rural–urban migration, which could exacerbate the challenges arising from climate change experienced by African cities (Plänitz, 2019; Serdeczny et al., 2017).

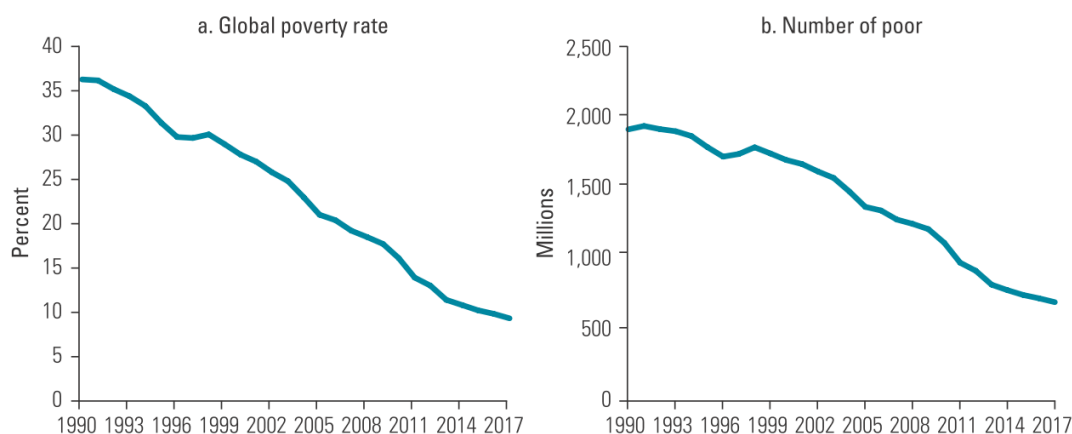
2. Poverty trends

Poverty worldwide: trends, rates and numbers of poor

There has been tremendous progress in poverty reduction at a global scale in recent decades. COVID-19 and climate change threaten to reverse these gains, although major threats to poverty eradication emerged long before COVID-19 (World Bank, 2020).

The sustained decline in extreme poverty (income below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day) that began in the 1990s continued through to 2017, although there has been a deceleration since 2013. Extreme poverty dropped by an average of about 1 percentage point per year from 1990 to 2015, but the rate of decline slowed from 2013 to 2015 to just 0.6 percentage point per year, slowing further between 2015 and 2017 to half a percentage point per year (World Bank, 2020, 2-3). Between 2015 and 2017, the number of people living below the international poverty line worldwide fell from 741 million to 689 million (World Bank, 2020) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Global Poverty Rate and Number of Poor at the US\$1.90-a-Day Poverty Line, 1990–2017



Source: World Bank, 2020, 2; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://research.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

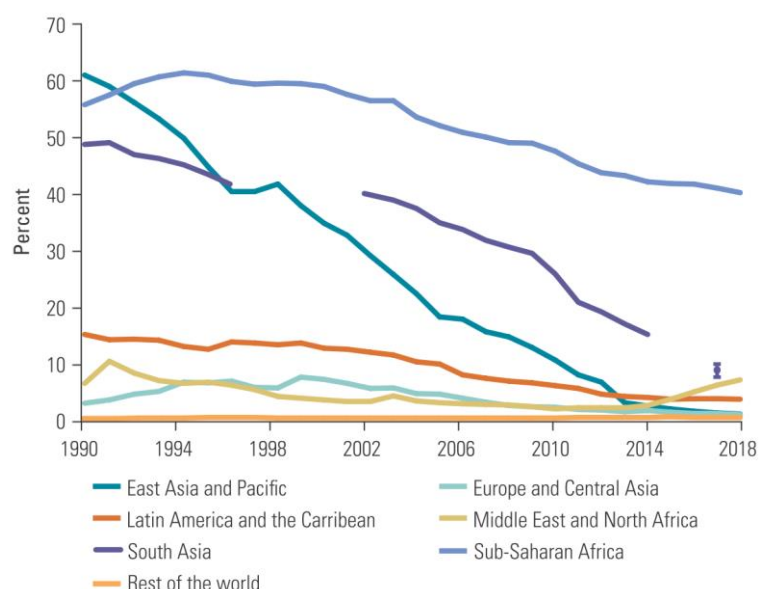
A key reason for the slowdown in global poverty reduction is because SSA has been experiencing a slower reduction in poverty than other world regions. (World Bank, 2020; Bicaba et al., 2017). Eighteen of the 20 poorest countries are situated in SSA (World Bank, 2020); and around three in five of the world's poor live in Africa—amounting to 57 percent in 2015, up from 15 percent in 1990 (see Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 34).

Approximately 40 percent of the SSA population still lived on less than US\$1.90/day in 2018, and almost 70 percent lived on less than \$3.20/day (the poverty line typical of lower-middle-income economies) (World Bank, 2020, 13). North Africa fares better, as well as the other developing regions of South Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (Bhorat et al., 2016). Figures 2 shows the proportion of the extreme poor in each region for the period 1990-2018 and Figure 3 illustrates the global distribution of the extreme poor in 2017.

While the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and other development regions fare better than SSA in terms of the proportion of the extreme poor, there has been a recent rise in the extreme poverty rate in MENA, from 2.3 percent in 2013 to 3.8 percent in 2015, doubling to 7.2 percent in 2018. Conflicts in Syria and the Republic of Yemen drive the increase (World Bank, 2020, 3) (see Tables 1 and 2).

SSA also has the highest rate of multidimensional poverty, with 58 percent of the population considered to be multidimensionally poor (see Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 39; Tewolde and Weldeyohannes, 2018, 474). The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an internationally comparable measure of acute poverty, capturing simultaneous deprivations and composed of three dimensions (health, education, and living standards) and 10 indicators.³ There is high variation in levels of multidimensional poverty within Africa (see the following section on [Poverty in Africa](#)).

Figure 2: Trends in Poverty Rates at the US\$1.90-a-Day Poverty Line, by Region, 1990–2018



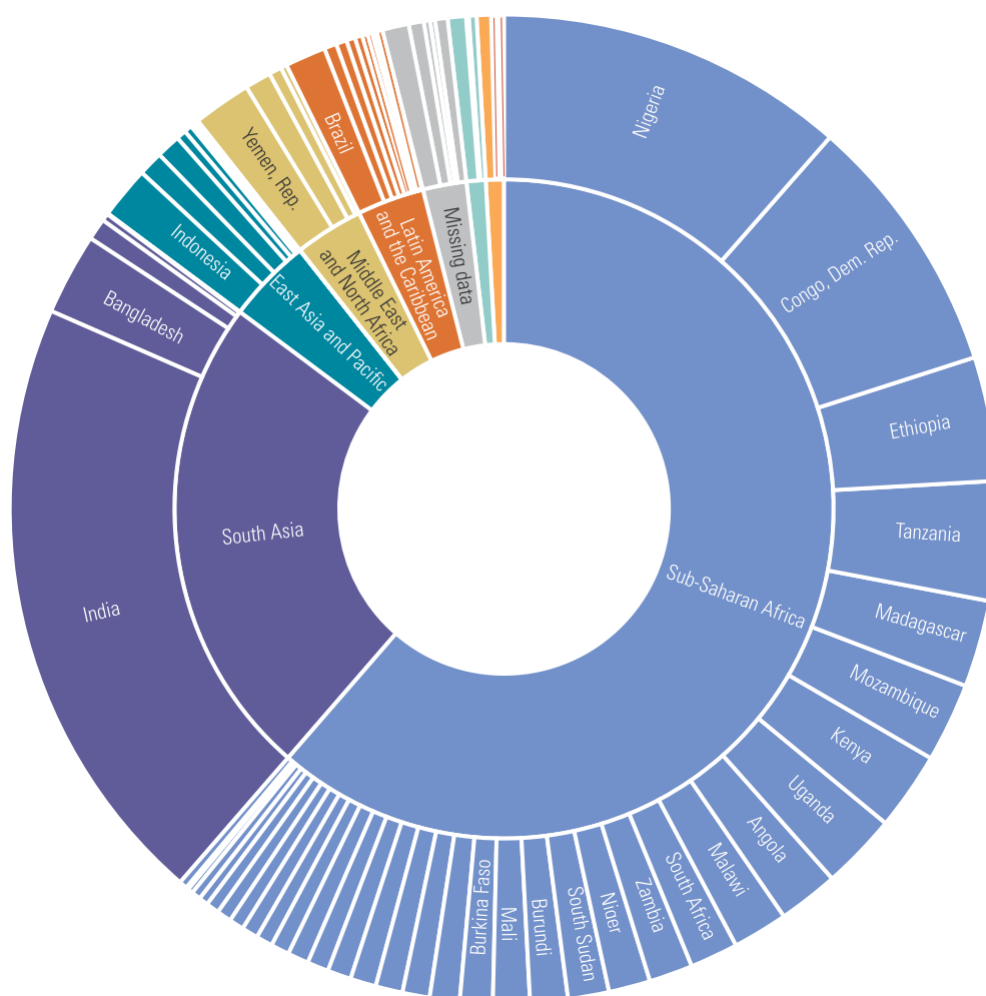
Source: World Bank 2020, 3; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>,⁵ licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

Figure 3: Global Distribution of Poverty at the US\$1.90-a-Day, by Region and Country, 2017

³ Each of the three dimensions is equally weighted, and each of the 10 indicators within the dimensions is also equally weighted. A person is identified as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one third of the weighted indicators (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 5)

⁴ Lined-up poverty estimates for South Asia are not reported for 1997–2001 and after 2014 because of a lack of population coverage.

⁵ Lined-up poverty estimates for South Asia are not reported for 1997–2001 and after 2014 because of a lack of population coverage.



Source: World Bank, 2020, 56; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

Table 1: Poverty rates (%) at the US\$1.90-a-day poverty line, by region, 1990–2018

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
East Asia and Pacific	60.9	53.2	40.4	37.9	29.1	18.3	14.8	8.1	2.6	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.2
Europe and Central Asia	3.1	5.2	7.0	7.7	5.7	4.7	2.7	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	15.2	14.2	13.9	13.7	12.1	10.0	7.0	5.7	4.1	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.8
Middle East and North Africa	6.6	7.1	6.3	4.0	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.3	2.7	3.8	5.1	6.3	7.2
South Asia	48.7	46.2	41.6	—	39.8	34.9	30.6	20.9	15.2	—	—	— ^a	—
Sub-Saharan Africa	55.7	60.6	59.8	59.4	56.4	52.0	49.0	45.3	42.1	41.8	41.7	41.0	40.2
Rest of the world	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6

Source: World Bank, 2020, 55; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

Table 2: Number of poor (millions) at the US\$1.90-a-day poverty line, by region, 1990–2018

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
East Asia and Pacific	976.9	891.5	702.1	681.8	538.4	346.2	285.9	159.7	53.3	42.2	35.3	29.3	24.5
Europe and Central Asia	14.4	24.5	33.0	36.2	26.7	22.1	12.9	9.7	8.7	7.3	6.2	6.5	5.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	66.3	65.6	67.6	69.8	64.4	55.3	39.9	33.7	25.2	23.6	24.5	24.4	24.2
Middle East and North Africa	15.0	17.4	16.6	10.9	10.0	9.7	9.0	8.0	9.8	13.8	19.1	24.0	28.0
South Asia	551.9	559.3	536.0	—	574.0	529.8	486.6	347.9	262.4	—	—	— ^a	—
Sub-Saharan Africa	283.8	335.0	358.4	384.8	395.1	394.4	403.4	404.2	407.9	416.4	426.8	430.8	433.4
Rest of the world	4.1	4.6	5.2	4.9	5.1	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.5	7.1	6.9	6.5	6.5

Source: World Bank, 2020, 55; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://research.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

See **Appendix A** for comparative figures and charts on US\$3.20/day and US\$5.50/day poverty lines.

Poverty in Africa: trends and variations

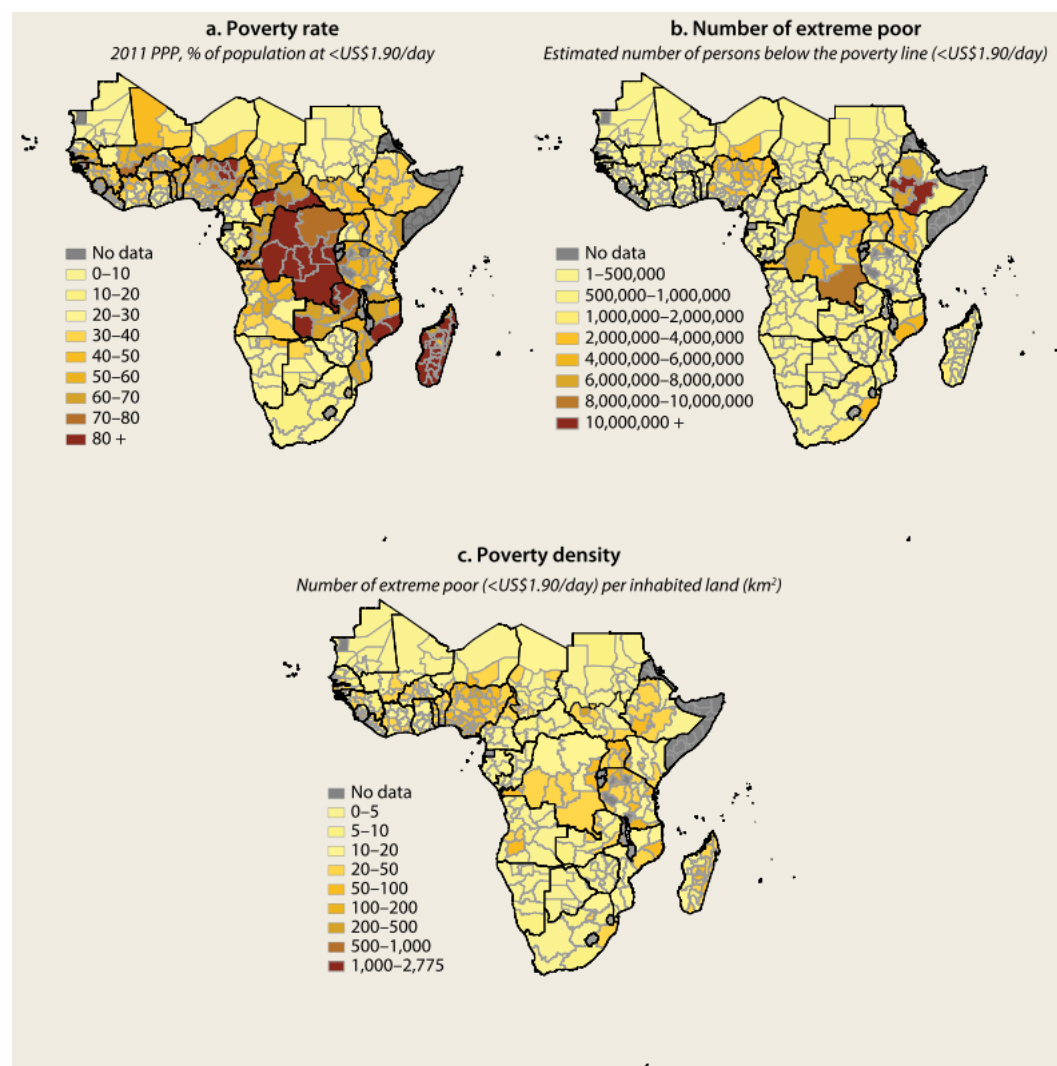
Similar to the uneven global distribution of extreme poverty, rates of poverty also differs among sub-regions and countries within Africa. Poverty rates are highest in the Sahel countries and the northern regions of the coastal West African countries, extending east into Ethiopia and southeast into the Congo Basin and its eastern surrounding regions in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 39). Rates and numbers are much lower in the higher-income countries of southern Africa, except for Lesotho, Eswatini, and Zambia, where poverty rates are high; and in the northern regions of the Sahel countries, where there is high urbanization and low representation of pastoralists in household surveys (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 39).

In terms of multi-dimensional poverty, East and Central Africa are considered the poorest regions, with 64 percent of people living in multidimensional poverty; whereas Southern Africa is also the least poor, with only 8.6 percent of its population in poverty (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 41-42).

Spatial variation

Varying poverty rates and numbers have spatial dimensions, with poverty largely concentrated in landlocked regions, mountainous regions, and arid/semi-arid lands (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019; Hulme and Lawson, 2017) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Africa's poverty and poor are concentrated in a limited number of (often landlocked) countries and regions within these countries⁶



Source: Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 40; based on World Bank's internal Global Monitoring Database, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/).

Rural-urban variation

Poverty within Africa, as in the rest of the world, is predominately clustered in rural areas, with approximately four out of five of Africa's poor (82 percent) live in rural areas (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 40-41). Farming dominates the livelihoods of the poor, with almost 60 percent of SSA's jobs and 78 percent of its poor workers obtain their livelihoods from agriculture, the least productive sector (Bicaba et al., 2016, 16).

Intra-country variations in multidimensional poverty are pronounced between cities and rural areas. For example, in the capitals and largest cities of Africa, including Kenya (Nairobi), Nigeria

⁶ PPP = purchasing power parity. Poverty estimates are based on the latest available household survey at the time of publication.

(Lagos), Uganda (Kampala) and Mozambique (Maputo), MPI poverty affects less than one in ten people, while the provinces of North Eastern in Kenya, Sokoto in Nigeria, Karamoja in Uganda and Zambezia in Mozambique have poverty rates of 85 percent or above (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 41-42). Many urban areas have seen dramatic improvements in their average levels of income and in human development indicators; whereas rural areas, and particularly remote rural areas and conflict zones, have seen little or no benefits (Hulme and Lawson, 2017). Rural poverty, low agricultural productivity and natural resource degradation are interrelated problems in many countries in SSA (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019).

Resource variations

The poverty-reducing effect of growth in SSA has been hampered by high inequality (income and gender) and the fact that the growth mostly depends on capital-intensive sectors like natural resource extraction (hydrocarbons and minerals), which needs time to reach the poor (Workneh, 2020; Bicaba et al., 2017). SSA's dependence on hydrocarbons and minerals for its recent growth, combined with much higher levels of socio-economic inequality in the region, have resulted in Africa's growth being concentrated in fewer hands than in other regions of the world (Hulme and Lawson, 2017). Once resource-dependence and inequality are controlled for, the gap between growth elasticities of poverty globally and in Africa narrows (see Bicaba et al., 2017).

Resource-rich and poor SSA countries thus fare differently in reducing income poverty. Tables 3 and 4 outline resource-rich and resource-scarce countries in Africa, some landlocked and some coastal. While resource-poor countries reduced poverty by 16 percentage points during 1995 – 2000, resource-rich countries recorded only a 7 percentage-point reduction (Bicaba et al., 2016).

See: Table 3: Resource-rich and resource-scarce countries, Source: Moti, 2019, 485, based on the African Development Report 2017, <http://116.203.177.230/index.php/ASSRJ/issue/view/267>

See: Table 4: Resource-rich and resource-scarce landlocked and coastal countries, Source: Moti, 2019, 485, based on the African Development Report 2017, <http://116.203.177.230/index.php/ASSRJ/issue/view/267>

Specific country variations

Some African countries have made particularly significant strides in poverty reduction. In Ethiopia, for example, there was a decrease of 7 percentage points in the extreme poverty rate between 2004/05 and 2015/16. In Kenya, the share of population living below the international poverty line decreased from 44 percent to 37 percent between 2005 and 2015; and in Namibia, it dropped from 23 percent to 13 percent between 2009 and 2015 (World Bank, 2020, 14). The economic crisis unleashed by COVID-19 could, however, reverse such gains in poverty reduction (World Bank, 2020).

There remain marked variations in poverty levels across different countries in Africa. Four of the most populous countries, Nigeria, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania, are home to almost half of Africa's poor (Bhorat et al., 2016, 10). Poverty rates are also particularly high in fragile states, where poverty decline is also particularly slow (Christiaensen &

Hill, 2019, 33). Among fragile states, both large (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo) and smaller countries (e.g. Liberia) post very high poverty rates (Bicaba et al., 2016).

The 2018 global MPI is disaggregated by 458 subnational regions in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 310 regions, over half of the people are poor, and in 160 regions, the figure is over three-quarters (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 41). In 42 regions, over 90 percent of people are poor, and they are located in ten countries: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 41). Figure 5 demonstrates in which countries the multidimensional poor are concentrated in SSA and Figure 6 illustrates the level of MPI and its composition in SSA. The largest contributor to poverty in SSA is nutrition, accounting for almost 19 percent of the overall MPI). It is closely followed by years of schooling (15 percent) and school attendance (13 percent) (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, 42).

See: Figure 5: Where multidimensional poor people are concentrated in Sub-Saharan

Africa (2018 MPI)⁷, Source: Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, p. 40,

https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf

See: Figure 6: Level of the MPI and its Composition in Sub-Saharan Africa (2018 MPI),

Source: Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, p. 42, [https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf)

[MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf)

Analysis of poverty in North Africa is affected by older data that may not reflect the current situation. According to existing data, 70 percent of MPI poor people in Arab states live in Sudan, Yemen and Somalia (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Where multidimensional poor people are concentrated in Arab States (2018

MPI)⁸, Source: Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, p. 50, [https://ophi.org.uk/wp-](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf)

[content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf)

Figure 8 demonstrates cross-country variations in headcount ratios of MPI poor and US\$1.90/day poor in Africa and world-wide.

See: Figure 8: Comparing headcount ratios of MPI poor and \$1.90/day poor, Source: Oxford

Poverty & Human Development Initiative, 2018, p. 15, [https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf)

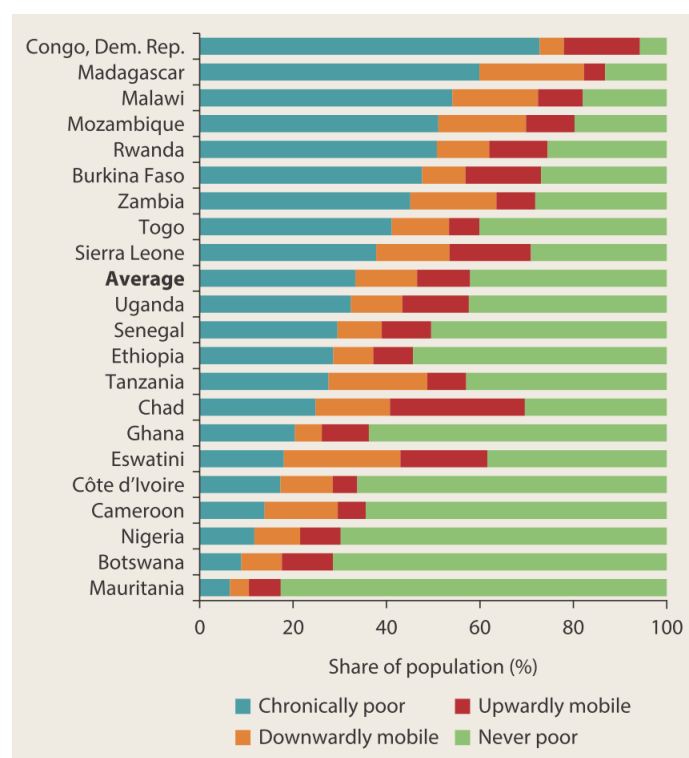
[MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/G-MPI_2018_2ed_web.pdf)

⁷ Based on 559 million multidimensional poor people.

⁸ Based on 66 million multidimensional poor people.

Poverty in Africa is both chronic and transitory (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019). Some households experience welfare gains in some years but setbacks in other years, with different households moving in and out of poverty (Hill, 2019). Uganda, for example, experienced the second-fastest rate of poverty reduction in SSSA from 2006-2013, but analysis indicates that for every three people who moved out of poverty during this period, two people fell back into poverty (see Hill, 2019). The share on non-poor in Africa who fall into poverty is on average the same as the share of poor people who move out of poverty (Hill, 2019) (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: The share of non-poor in Africa who fall into poverty and of poor people who move out of poverty⁹



Source: Hill, 2019, 197; based on Dang and Dabalen 2018, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](#)

Three in five of Africa's poor are chronically poor—that is, poor for several years in a row, suggesting that poverty in Africa remains deeply structural. This stems in part from a lack of assets, weak access to public goods (infrastructure), and poor income-earning opportunities (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019).

The depth of poverty in Africa is also more extreme than in other areas of the world. For those living below the poverty line in Africa, the average consumption level is only US\$.70 a day, considerably lower than levels in other regions that are all nearly approaching the \$1 a day level. Around two-thirds of the population in the four African regions, excluding North Africa, living

⁹ Poverty statistics refer to the latest household survey year for each country. The 'chronically poor' category includes households that were poor in both periods of the analysis; 'downwardly mobile' refers to households that fell into poverty in the second period; 'upwardly mobile' includes those who were poor in the first period but not poor in the second period; and 'never poor' includes households that were nonpoor in both periods.

below the poverty line are living in extreme poverty, with around one-third living on \$.25 to \$2 a day. In contrast, in South Asia, 60 per cent of the poor live on average incomes between \$1.25 and \$2 a day (Bhorat et al., 2016, 10).

Demographics

The poor globally remain predominantly rural, young and undereducated (World Bank, 2020; Hulme and Lawson, 2017).

Children and youth: Children and youth (ages 15–24) together account for two-thirds of the global poor (World Bank, 2020, 9). Child poverty is especially pervasive in Africa, with half of Africa's poor below the age of 15 (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 38). The region with the highest intensity of poverty is Sub-Saharan Africa, where poor children are simultaneously deprived on average in 56 percent of the indicators (Oxford Poverty & Human Development Index, 2018, 35). Most children live in larger households, which tend to be poorer (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019).

Gender: Women are overrepresented among the poor globally and across most regions of the world, with the widest gaps in female poverty among children (World Bank, 2020, 9). While there is evidence of multiple structural inequalities facing women relative to men in Africa (e.g. lower education levels, lower ownership and control over assets, and lower access to the labour market), gender gaps in poverty are modest (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 38). When looking at the gender dimension of poverty by household type, female-headed households are not systematically poorer. Africa's female share of the poor is about the same as the male share (50.2 percent and 49.8 percent, respectively). In addition, many female-headed households have seen their poverty falling even faster than male-headed households (see Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 38).

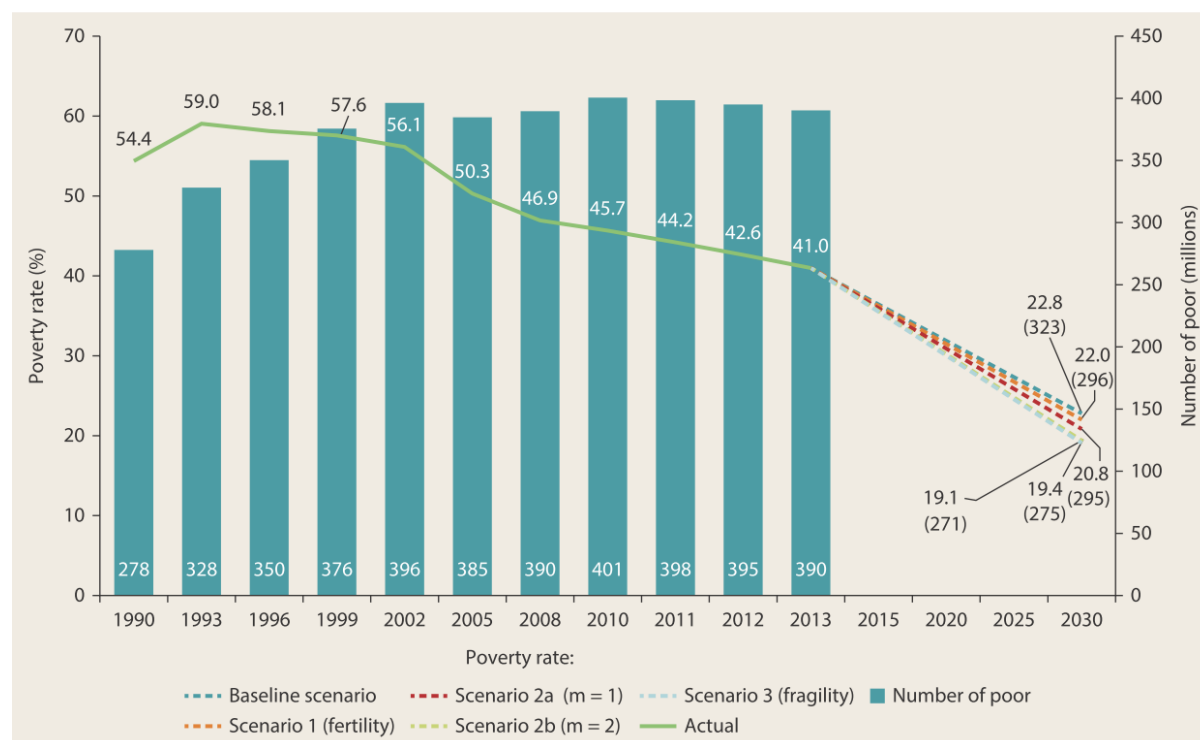
Education: Poor people are considerably less educated in Africa, with two in five poor adults having no formal education, reflecting a legacy of poor educational outcomes (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019)

New poor: Many of the new poor, those affected by Covid-19 and the ensuing economic difficulties - are likely to be engaged in informal services, construction, and manufacturing. These are the sectors in which economic activity is most affected by lockdowns and other mobility restrictions as well as mandatory social distancing (World Bank, 2020).

3. Poverty forecasts

A review of poverty in Africa finds that although the region has made substantial progress since the early 1990s, the number of poor has continued to increase. According to World Bank estimates (prior to COVID-19), Africa's extreme poverty rate would still be around 20 percent in 2030, under varying scenarios, and the world's poverty would become increasingly concentrated within Africa (Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 33). This is down from approximately 40 percent in 2015 (see Figure 10). An analysis incorporating COVID-19 impacts on poverty rates calculates a 33 percent extreme poverty rate in 2030 in a Reference scenario before COVID-19 (see Cilliers et al., 2020 in the [COVID-19 – Africa-wide impacts](#) section).

Figure 10: Poverty rate and poverty reduction estimates for Africa – to 2030 (pre-COVID-19 forecast)¹⁰



Source: Christiaensen & Hill, 2019, 35, based on World Bank calculations, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](#).

Another pre-COVID-19 study of poverty in SSA forecasts poverty paths to 2030, drawing on three main information sources - real consumption (or income) per capita; redistribution of consumption (or income) between the 10 richest and the 40 poorest percent of population; and UN population projections (Bicaba et al., 2017).

While threats to poverty eradication goals emerged well before COVID-19, the pandemic and its associated economic crisis, alongside climate change and conflict, are expected to reverse the gains in poverty reduction. Global poverty as measured by the international poverty line is expected to rise in 2020 for the first time since 1998 (World Bank, 2020, 5). The population below the US\$3.20/day threshold may fall below the international poverty line because of the COVID-19 pandemic or other negative income shocks (World Bank, 2020).

Climate change poses acute and medium-term threats to poverty reduction, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where most of the global poor are concentrated (World Bank, 2020). The

¹⁰ The poverty rate is the percentage of the population living at or below US\$1.90 per day. The baseline scenario assumes average distribution-neutral growth of 2.8 percent per year. Scenario 1 assumes a low-fertility population growth scenario instead of the historical population growth rates. Scenario 2a assumes more pro-poor growth, with average GDP growth the same as in the baseline scenario but with the incomes of the poor growing 1 percentage point faster than the historical average. Scenario 2b also holds average GDP growth the same as in the baseline scenario, but assumes annual income growth among the poor that is 2 percentage points faster than the historical average. Scenario 3 assumes that increased policy attention would make Africa's fragile states grow 3 percentage points faster than their historical average.

negative effects of climate change on poverty are also likely to be concentrated among those whose incomes are not far above the poverty threshold (World Bank, 2020).

COVID-19

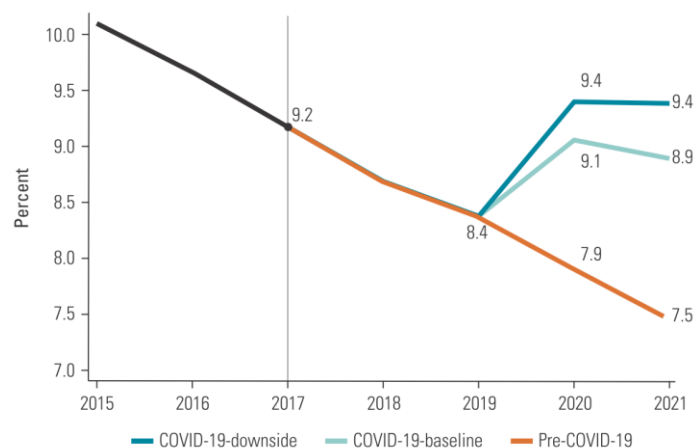
Global impact

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the policy responses to manage it, have produced a wide range of risks, including direct risks to people's health and to healthcare systems; and indirect risks to economies, livelihoods, social relations and political systems, with longer-term risks of polarisation and insecurity (Herbert and Marquette, 2020).

Taking into consideration the economic fallout of COVID-19, new forecasts of poverty, published in October 2020, suggest that, in the baseline scenario, poverty would increase by 1.2 percentage points in 2020 and 1.4 percentage points in 2021, while in the downside scenario, the increase would reach 1.5 percentage points in 2020 and 1.9 percentage points in 2021. These scenarios translate into a global poverty rate of between 9.1 percent and 9.4 percent in 2020 and between 8.9 percent and 9.4 percent in 2021 (World Bank, 2020, 4-5) (See Figure 12).

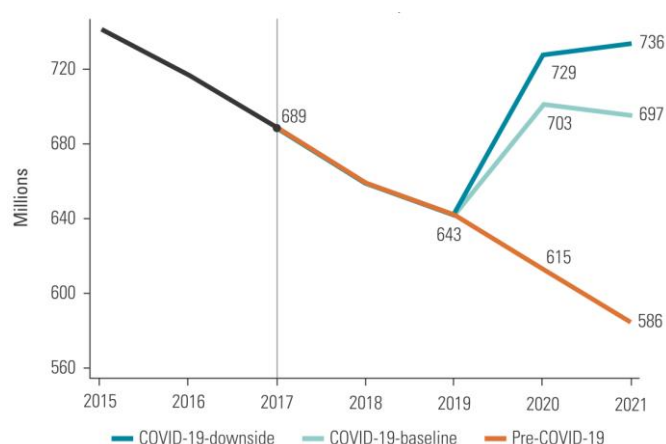
These new results suggest that, in 2020, an estimated 88 million people worldwide will be pushed into poverty under the baseline COVID-19 scenario and as many as 115 million people under the downside scenario. The projected poverty rates for 2020 are similar to those in 2017; indicating that the impacts of COVID-19 are expected to set back progress toward ending extreme poverty by at least three years (World Bank, 2020, 4-5) (See Figure 13).

Figure 12: New Forecasts of the Poverty Rate Worldwide at the US\$1.90-a-Day Poverty Line, 2015–2021¹¹ (published in October 2020)



Source: Source: World Bank, 2020, 34; based on updated estimates based on Lakner et al. (2020), PovcalNet (online analysis tool), World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, and Global economic Prospects, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](#)

Figure 13: New Forecasts of the Number of Poor Worldwide at the US\$1.90-a-Day Poverty Line, 2015–2021¹² (published in October 2020)



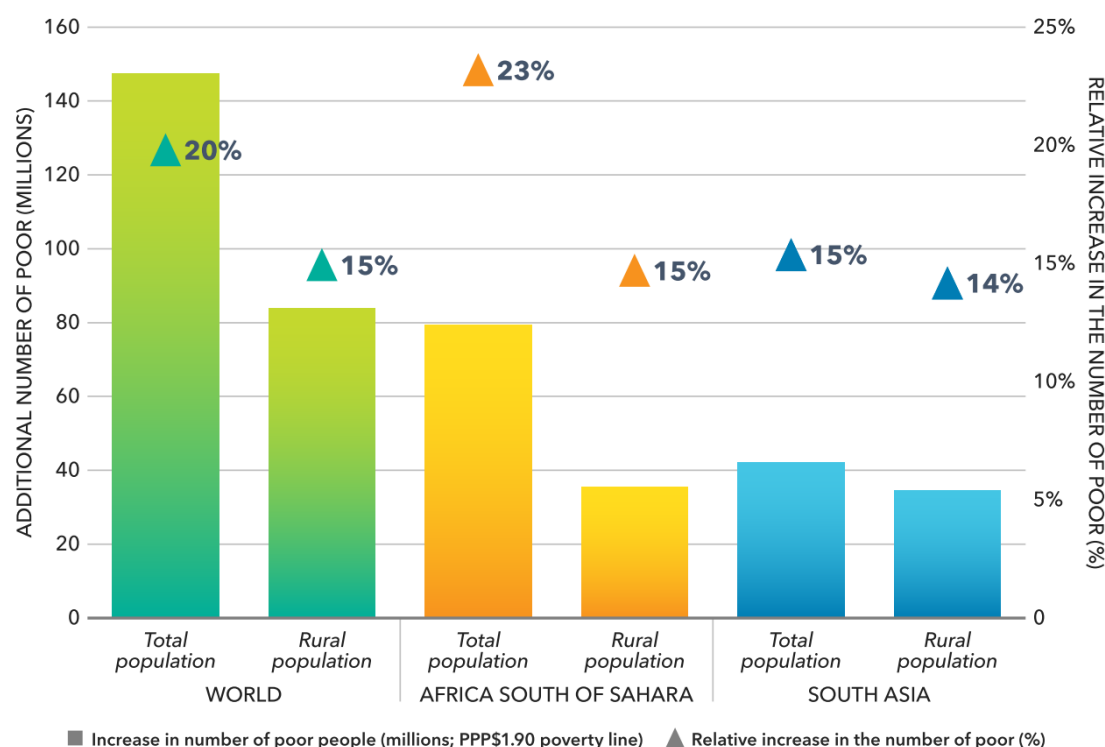
Source: World Bank, 2020, 34; based on updated estimates of Mahler et al. 2020, based on Lakner et al. 2020; PovcalNet (online analysis tool), World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>; World Bank 2020a, 2020b, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](#)

¹¹ Three growth scenarios are considered: (1) pre-COVID-19 uses the January 2020 Global Economic Prospects growth rate projections, predating the COVID-19 crisis; (2) COVID-19-downside and (3) COVID-19-baseline use the June 2020 Global Economic Prospects growth rates projecting a contraction in global growth for 2020 of 8 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

¹² Three growth scenarios are considered: First, pre-COVID-19 uses the January 2020 Global Economic Prospects (GEP) growth forecasts for 2020 and 2021, predating the COVID-19 crisis, and the June 2020 forecasts for 2019. Second and third, COVID-19-downside and COVID-19-baseline use the June 2020 GEP growth forecasts projecting a contraction in global growth in 2020 of 8 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

It is estimated that for developing countries as a group, the economic fallout of COVID-19 would lead to a decline of their aggregate GDP of 3.6 percent, but that economies in Africa south of the Sahara, Southeast Asia, and Latin America would be hit much harder due to their relatively high dependence on trade and primary commodity exports (Laborde et al., 2020) (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Impact of COVID-19 global economic crisis on extreme poverty¹³ (published in June 2020)



Source: Laborde et al., 2020, 18; based on simulations with MIRAGRODEP model, reproduced with [permission](#)

In developing countries, groups that are especially vulnerable and face higher risks from the various impacts of COVID-19 include the poor, informal workers, urban populations, refugees

¹³ Key assumptions for the scenario analysis:

All countries affected by COVID-19 implement social distancing measures covering on average 40% to 50% of the population for between 2 and 3 months. International travel is essentially shut down, closing many tourism-related activities. Social distancing measures allow only essential work, such as food production and distribution, under normal conditions. On average, one-third of skilled workers can continue to work effectively via various forms of telecommuting. The containment measures cause bottlenecks and delays in international transport, pushing up freight costs by 3%.

While the agriculture and food sectors have been identified as essential in most countries, some supply disruption caused by reduced labour mobility is assumed and that perishable farm products suffer greater postharvest losses of 5% due to logistics problems and demand fallout.

The present scenario accounts for the economic stimulus packages being implemented by countries in North America and in Europe, including significant income transfers to households. The scenario does not consider any additional international support or government stimulus in developing countries.

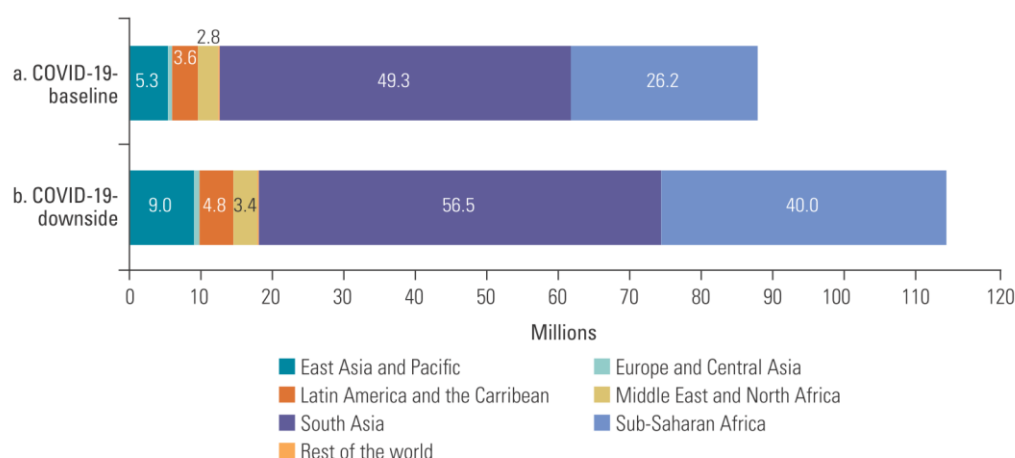
and internally displaced people, women and girls, youth, healthcare professionals, prison populations and military personnel (Herbert 2019; cited in Herbert and Marquette, 2020).¹⁴

Africa-wide impacts

While the decline in economic growth due to COVID-19 is projected to be more modest in SSA than in advanced economies, the large number of people living close to the poverty line in SSA are likely to result in one of the largest increases in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2020, 14-15). The new forecasts of the pandemic's global poverty impacts through 2021 suggest that Sub-Saharan Africa will be the second most severely affected region (after South Asia), with 26 million to 40 million more of its population falling into extreme poverty (World Bank, 2020, 14-15) (see Figure 15).

The COVID-19 crisis also threatens the food security and nutrition of millions of people, many of whom were already suffering (FAO, 2020). Existing food stocks are likely to have been reduced with local food shortages increasingly common. High-value commodities, like fruits and vegetables, meat, fish and dairy, while readily available for the time-being, tend to be more vulnerable to logistical problems as their production is labour intensive and the products are highly perishable (FAO, 2020). In many countries, food prices are rising in urban areas, where the highest concentration of consumers can be found, even while food prices are declining in rural areas, where food is produced (FAO, 2020).

Figure 15: Additional Poor at the US\$1.90-a-Day Poverty Line in 2020, per the Covid-19-Baseline and Covid-19-Downside Scenarios (published in October 2020)



Sources: World Bank, 2020, 14-15; based on updated estimates of Mahler et al. 2020, based on Lakner et al. 2020; PovcalNet (online analysis tool), World Bank, Washington, DC, <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>; World Bank 2020a, 2020b, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

A recent scenario analysis of the impact of COVID-19 in Africa (published in October 2020) finds that compared to the pre-COVID-19 forecast, Africa's economy will be between US\$349 billion and US\$643 billion smaller in 2030 (Cilliers et al., 2020, 2). In a best case scenario, GDP per

¹⁴ Understanding the 'intersectionality' of these categories is key as vulnerabilities overlap and interconnect to multiply disadvantage.

capita will recover to 2019 levels in 2024. In the worst case, Africa will only return to 2019 levels in 2030 (Cilliers et al., 2020, 2).

The growth forecast released by the IMF in October 2019 (International Futures (IFs) forecasting data) serves as the basis for a pre-COVID-19 Reference scenario against which alternative pathways can be measured. The IMF forecast an average of 2.6 percent growth for Africa in 2020. Initialising from this rate, the forecast from IFs was for Africa to experience an average of 3.8 percent growth from 2020 to 2030 (Cilliers et al., 2020, 5).

The IMF has twice updated its October 2019 growth forecasts. The first was in April 2020 and the second was at the end of June 2020. These updates serve as the basis for the V scenario. The V scenario is for an average growth rate of 3.1 percent for Africa to 2030 in the IFs forecasting platform, instead of the 3.8 percent reflected in the Reference or pre-COVID growth scenario. It includes a rapid economic recovery in 2021. In the U scenario, Africa is only expected to recover by 2022; whereas in the L scenario recovery occurs in 2023 (Cilliers et al., 2020, 7).

According to this study, relative to the pre-COVID-19 forecast, 14 million additional Africans will be extremely poor (below the US\$1.90/day threshold) in 2020, with an additional 38 to 70 million more people classified as extremely poor in 2030. This translates to poverty rates of 35-37 percent of Africa's total population (Cilliers et al., 2020, 2). In the V, U and L scenarios, in 2021 an additional 25 million, 29 million or 30 million Africans respectively would drop below US\$1.90 per person per day compared to the pre-COVID-19 poverty forecast (Cilliers et al., 2020, 15).

In terms of forecasts to 2030 (Cilliers et al., 2020, 16) :

- In the Reference scenario – before COVID-19, extreme poverty in Africa would have declined by 2.5 percentage points from 2019 to 2030; equivalent to an increase of 101 million people given Africa's rapid population growth.
- In the V scenario extreme poverty will only decline by 0.6 percentage points (an increase of 138 million people).
- In the U and L scenarios, the percent of extremely poor Africans will actually increase above the 2019 rate (reflecting an increase of 152 million and 171 million people respectively).

Whereas roughly 570 million Africans (33 percent of total population) would probably still live in extreme income poverty in 2030 in the Reference scenario, the impact of COVID-19 is to increase that number to 607 million (V scenario), 621 million (U scenario) or 640 million (L scenario), ranging from 35.7 percent to 37.6 percent of the total population (Cilliers et al., 2020, 16) (see Figure 16).

The scenario analysis finds that the countries that are most negatively affected under all three scenarios are Nigeria, the DRC, Ethiopia, Niger and Tanzania. Nigeria and Ethiopia are the two most populous countries in Africa while the DRC and Tanzania are the fourth and fifth most populous, respectively. Niger has the most youthful population on the continent (at a median age below 16 years) with some of the lowest human development indicators that would likely deteriorate even further (Cilliers et al., 2020, 16).

The analysis also finds that whereas the percentage of Africa's undernourished population would have modestly declined to 221 million people (or 13 percent of total population) by 2030 in the Reference scenario, it is now set to increase (to 233 million, 239 million or 247 million in the V, U

and L scenarios, respectively. Infant mortality will also be three times higher by 2030 than the target set by the UN (Cilliers et al., 2020, 16).

Early data of the economic effects of data point to significant drops in labour income in various countries, such as Nigeria and Ethiopia. Forty-two percent of respondents in Nigeria who were working before the outbreak reported being out of work in May 2020, due to COVID-19, and nearly 80 percent of respondents reported income reductions since mid-March (Siwatu et al. 2020; cited in World Bank, 2020, 7). In Ethiopia, 13 percent of respondents surveyed between April 2 and May 13 reported losing their jobs (including 19 percent in urban areas), and 55 percent reported reduced household income and consumption (Wieser et al. 2020; cited in World Bank, 2020, 7).

Another recent study (June 2020) also projects that COVID-19 will have a significant economic impact on African economies, with an estimated contraction in GDP growth by 1.15 percent in 2020 (1.6 percent for SSA on its own (Diop & Asongu, 2020, 5). This growth contraction could increase the poverty headcount for Africa as a whole to 35.85 percent for the the US\$1.90 poverty line, 57.55 percent for the US\$3.20 per day poverty line and 76.42 percent for the higher poverty line (US\$5.5/ day) (Diop & Asongu, 2020, 7).¹⁵

These amount to 2.09 additional percentage points in poverty headcount rates at US\$1.90/day and US\$3.2/day, corresponding to 28,140,345 and 26,418,200 million of new poor in absolute terms, respectively. The rise on the poverty headcount rates could be equal to 1.78 points percentage at the higher poverty line of US\$5.5/day equivalent to 19,062,643 million of new people living in poverty (Diop & Asongu, 2020, 7-9).

There is regional and country variation in these poverty forecasts. The incidence of the COVID-19 pandemic is less pronounced in Northern and Southern Africa, especially in Mozambique, Namibia and Algeria, with regard to the extreme poverty line. People living under this poverty line are fewer in Northern Africa, in comparison to Southern Africa (Diop & Asongu, 2020, 8). Focusing on extreme poverty at US\$1.90/day, the poverty headcount rates ranges from 0.37 percent (Mauritius) to 79.42 person (Madagascar) while for US\$3.2/day, the range is from 2.82 percent (Mauritius) to 92.35 percent (Democratic Republic of Congo). At the US\$5.5/day, the rate is between 9.39 percent (Seychelles) and 98.08 percent (Democratic Republic of Congo). The additional percentage points in poverty headcount ratio ranges from 0.00% (Mozambique and Namibia) to 5.90 percentage points (Sierra Leone) for the lower poverty line (Diop and Asongu, 2020, 8).

The effects of COVID-19 is changing the composition of the poor in developing countries. Prior to the pandemic, fragile and conflict-affected economies were forecasted to represent the majority of the extreme poor by 2030, with Sub-Saharan Africa contributing a large share of the total (Corral et al., 2020; cited in World Bank, 2020). In the most recent COVID-19 projections, however, only 20 percent of the new poor are predicted to live in fragile and conflict-affected economies, indicating that FCAS may have a smaller share of the global poor in coming years compared to the share of the global poor that they have today (World Bank, 2020).

¹⁵ Employing the PovcalNet computational tool for poverty monitoring in 50 African countries, with Pre Covid-19 macroeconomic projections of October 2019 and revised macroeconomic projections of April 2020, the following main findings are established.

Climate change

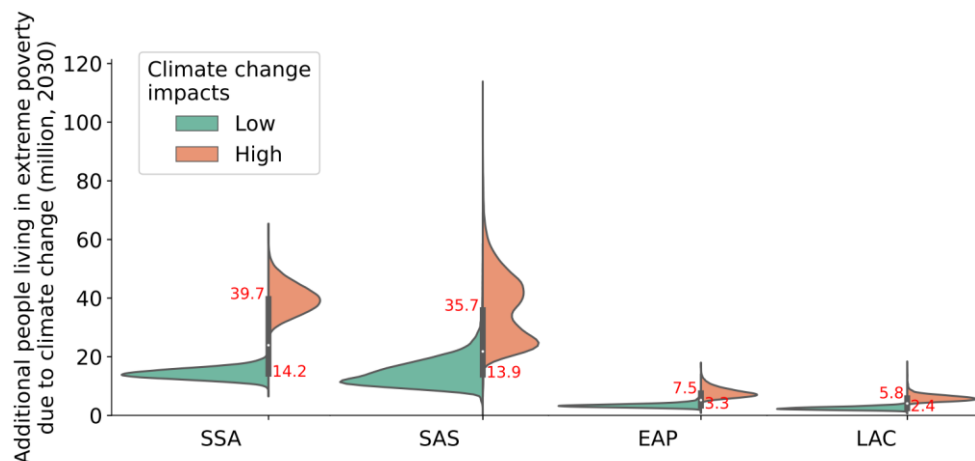
It is widely recognized that climate change will disproportionately affect poor countries, and poorer individuals within countries, with Africa identified as the region most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (see Jafino et al., 2020; Serdeczny et al., 2017).

Climate change projections for Africa include: a warming trend, particularly in the inland subtropics; frequent occurrence of extreme heat events; increasing aridity; and changes in rainfall—with a particularly pronounced decline in southern Africa and an increase in East Africa (Serdeczny et al., 2017). These changes impact food security and health (Jafino et al., 2020).

An assessment of the future impacts of climate change on extreme poverty by 2030¹⁶, finds that the range of the number of people falling into poverty due to the short-term impacts of climate change globally is predicted to be between 32 million and 132 million in most scenarios, based on varied socioeconomic and demographic changes¹⁷ (Jafino et al., 2020). This amounts to a total of 313.5 million people in extreme poverty in 2030 (Jafino et al., 2020, 4).

The number of people falling into extreme poverty due to climate change varies across regions. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region where climate change is expected to push the most people into poverty. Under high climate change scenarios, under which there are greater impacts of climate change, the numbers of people pushed into extreme poverty in SSA are 39.7 million (Jafino et al., 2020, 5) (see Figure 17 and Table 7).

Figure 17: Regional breakdown of people pushed to extreme poverty in 2030 due to climate change impacts¹⁸



Source: Jafino et al., 2020, p. 6, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

¹⁶ Based on the most recent available household surveys from the World Bank's Global Monitoring Database.

¹⁷ These include varied economic growth, equality, access to infrastructure and services, and population growth.

¹⁸ SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa; SAS: South Asia; EAP: East Asia & Pacific; LAC: Latin America & Caribbean.

Table 7: Poverty headcount based on different scenarios
(Numbers in climate change scenarios are additional headcount from the baseline)

	Baseline (million people)	High climate change (million people)	Low climate change (million people)	High climate change (increase from baseline)	Low climate change (increase from baseline)
EAP	11.8	7.5	3.3	63.6%	28%
LAC	1.9	5.8	2.4	305%	126.3%
SAS	30.6	35.7	13.9	116.7%	45.5%
SSA	224.4	39.7	14.2	17.7%	6.3%

Source: Jafino et al., 2020, p. 6, licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 IGO \(CC BY 3.0 IGO\)](#)

SSA's already high rates of undernutrition and infectious disease can be expected to increase compared to a scenario without climate change (Serdeczny et al., 2017). Particularly vulnerable are the rainfed agricultural systems on which the livelihoods of a large proportion of the region's population currently depend, with rainfed agriculture accounting for approximately 96 percent of overall crop production (see Serdeczny et al., 2017). The pastoral systems of the drylands of the Sahel are also vulnerable to climate change as they are heavily dependent on natural resources, including pasture, fodder, forest products and water, all of which are directly affected by climate variability. Livestock is particularly vulnerable to drought, for example (Serdeczny et al., 2017)

Growing risks to agricultural livelihoods is expected to increase the rate of rural–urban migration, with already significant rates of urbanisation in the region (Serdeczny et al., 2017). This could exacerbate the challenges arising from climate change experienced by African cities. Increased severity of rainfall, for example, threaten large parts of urban settlers living in flood prone areas (Plänitz, 2019). In addition, higher prices for food, due to limited supply or increased production costs, are passed on to customers in urban areas (Plänitz, 2019). Lack of affordability and availability of nutritious food can in turn produce higher levels of undernutrition and undermine human health (Serdeczny et al., 2017).

Climatic changes and sectoral climate impacts will not be uniform across the region. East Africa is at higher risk of flooding and concurrent health impacts and infrastructure damages; whereas West Africa is projected to experience severe impacts on food production, including through declines in oceanic productivity, undermining food security and, health and employment (Serdeczny et al., 2017).

Sea-level rise puts at risk a growing number of densely populated coastal cities, whose population is set to increase, potentially exacerbated by more in-migration as a result of rural livelihood degradation. South Africa, on the other hand, is expected to have the strongest decline in precipitation with concurrent risks of drought (Serdeczny et al., 2017).

4. References

- Bhorat, H., Cassim, A., Ewinyu, A. & Steenkamp, F. (2016). Social Protection and Inequality in Africa: Exploring the interactions. In eds. A. Odusola, G.A. Cornia, H. Bhorat, & P. Conceição. *Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa. Divergence, Determinants and Consequences*. New York: Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, 179-202.
<https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/reports/income-inequality-trends-in-sub-saharan-africa--divergence--dete.html>
- Bicaba, Z., Brixiová, Z., & Ncube, M. (2016). *Eliminating extreme poverty in Africa: trends, policies and the role of international organizations*.
http://www.opensaldru.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11090/819/2016_170_Saldrwp.pdf?sequence=1
- Bicaba, Z., Brixiová, Z., & Ncube, M. (2017). Can extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa be eliminated by 2030?. *Journal of African Development*, 19(2), 93-110.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jafrideve.19.2.0093>
- Cilliers, J., Oosthuizen, M., Alexander, K., Pooe, T. K., & Moyer, J. D. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 in Africa: a scenario analysis to 2030. *ISS Africa Report*, 2020(24), 1-40.
<https://journals.co.za/content/journal/10520/EJC-1fd9f859d0>
- Christiaensen, L. & Hill, R. (2019) Poverty in Africa. In eds. K. Beegle & L. Christiaensen. *Accelerating poverty reduction in Africa*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. 33-50.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32354>
- Diop, S., & Asongu, S. (2020). The Covid-19 Pandemic and the New Poor in Africa: the Straw that Broke the Camel's Back. *European Xtramile Centre of African Studies, WP/20/038 (2020)*.
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3636380
- FAO. (2020). Regional overview of food security and nutrition: Africa-2019. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). <http://www.fao.org/3/ca7343en/CA7343EN.pdf>
- Herbert, S & Marquette, H. (2020). COVID-19, governance and conflict: emerging impacts and future evidence needs. K4D Emerging Issues Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.
- Hill, R. (2019). Managing risks and conflict. In eds. K. Beegle & L. Christiaensen. *Accelerating poverty reduction in Africa*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. 197-242.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32354>
- Hulme, D., & Lawson, D. (2017). What works for Africa's poorest? In D. Lawson, L. Ado-Kofie, L., & D. Hulme (eds.), *What works for Africa's poorest*, 1-16.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Munshi_Sulaiman/publication/312636449_CHAPTER_8_Effects_of_food_assistance_Evaluation_of_a_food-for-training_project_in_South_Sudan_Programmes_and_policies_for_the_extreme_poor/links/599ea0ca0f7e9b892bb8f79c/CHAPTER-8-Effects-of-food-assistance-Evaluation-of-a-food-for-training-project-in-South-Sudan-Programmes-and-policies-for-the-extreme-poor.pdf#page=18
- Jafino, B. A., Walsh, B., Rozenberg, J., & Hallegatte, S. (2020). Revised Estimates of the Impact of Climate Change on Extreme Poverty by 2030. Policy research working paper. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34555/Revised-Estimates-of-the-Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Extreme-Poverty-by-2030.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Laborde, D., Martin, W., & Vos, R. (2020). Poverty and food insecurity could grow dramatically as COVID-19 spreads. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rob_Vos2/publication/343267777_Poverty_and_food_insecurity_could_grow_dramatically_as_COVID-19_spreads/links/5f20772345851515ef509bf7/Poverty-and-food-insecurity-could-grow-dramatically-as-COVID-19-spreads.pdf

Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative. (2018). Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018: The most detailed picture to date of the world's poorest people. University of Oxford.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frank_Vollmer2/publication/330421754_Global_Multidimensional_Poverty_Index_2018_The_Most_Detailed_Picture_To_Date_of_the_World's_Poorest_People/links/5c3f234d458515a4c72a674b/Global-Multidimensional-Poverty-Index-2018-The-Most-Detailed-Picture-To-Date-of-the-Worlds-Poorest-People.pdf

Plänitz, E. (2019). Neglecting the urban? Exploring rural-urban disparities in the climate change–conflict literature on Sub-Saharan Africa. *Urban Climate*, 30, 100533.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.uclim.2019.100533>

Serdeczny, O., Adams, S., Baarsch, F., Coumou, D., Robinson, A., Hare, W., ... & Reinhardt, J. (2017). Climate change impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa: from physical changes to their social repercussions. *Regional Environmental Change*, 17(6), 1585-1600.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10113-015-0910-2>

Tewelde, M. and Weldeyohannes, M. (2018). Drivers of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy implications for achieving Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 8, Issue 12, 473-486.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.8.12.2018.p8462>

Workneh, M. A. (2020). Gender Inequality, Governance, and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Poverty & Public Policy*, 12(2), 150-174. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pop4.278>

World Bank (2020). Reversals of fortune. Poverty and shared prosperity 2020. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34496/9781464816024.pdf>

Suggested citation

Haider, H. (2020). *The bottom billion in Africa: Poverty trends and forecasts*. K4D Helpdesk Report 922. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

About this report

This report is based on five days of desk-based research. The K4D research helpdesk provides rapid syntheses of a selection of recent relevant literature and international expert thinking in response to specific questions relating to international development. For any enquiries, contact helpdesk@k4d.info.

K4D services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations working in international development, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), with Education Development Trust, Itad, University of Leeds Nuffield Centre for International Health and Development, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), University of Birmingham International Development Department (IDD) and the University of Manchester Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI).

This report was prepared for the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and its partners in support of pro-poor programmes. It is licensed for non-commercial purposes only. Except where otherwise stated, it is licensed for non-commercial purposes under the terms of the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#). K4D cannot be held responsible for errors, omissions or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this report. Any views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, K4D or any other contributing organisation.



© Crown copyright 2020.

5. Appendices

Appendix A

Table 1: Poverty rates (%) at the US\$3.20-a-day poverty line, by region, 1990–2018

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
East Asia and Pacific	85.0	79.4	70.2	66.6	56.6	44.5	37.0	25.8	14.5	12.0	10.3	8.7	7.2
Europe and Central Asia	10.3	15.3	18.2	21.2	15.0	11.5	7.2	6.4	5.7	5.3	4.7	4.7	4.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	29.5	28.5	27.8	27.2	25.2	21.5	15.8	13.1	10.9	10.5	10.5	9.5	9.3
Middle East and North Africa	27.3	29.9	29.3	22.1	20.6	19.2	17.1	13.7	13.8	15.3	16.7	18.5	20.3
South Asia	82.4	81.1	78.0	—	76.2	72.2	68.8	60.1	52.4	—	—	—	—
Sub-Saharan Africa	76.1	79.5	79.1	79.3	78.3	75.8	73.2	70.6	68.4	68.1	68.0	67.3	66.6
Rest of the world	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8

Source: World Bank, 2020, 63; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

Table 2: Number of poor (millions) at the US\$3.20-a-day poverty line, by region, 1990–2018

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
East Asia and Pacific	1,364.0	1,329.2	1,220.5	1,198.6	1,046.8	843.5	717.4	510.6	293.1	243.8	211.6	179.1	148.9
Europe and Central Asia	47.8	71.6	85.3	99.7	70.1	54.0	34.2	30.7	27.6	25.9	23.1	23.0	21.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	129.0	131.8	135.2	138.2	133.6	118.6	90.2	77.4	66.7	64.9	65.6	59.8	59.4
Middle East and North Africa	62.3	73.5	76.8	61.1	60.0	58.9	55.3	46.8	49.9	56.2	62.7	70.6	78.6
South Asia	933.7	980.6	1,004.1	—	1,100.0	1,096.5	1,095.6	998.7	904.9	—	—	—	—
Sub-Saharan Africa	387.5	439.5	474.0	514.2	548.6	575.0	602.2	630.7	662.8	678.4	695.5	706.5	718.3
Rest of the world	6.8	7.7	7.5	7.4	6.8	7.5	7.6	8.3	9.0	9.7	9.7	9.0	9.0

Source: World Bank, 2020, 63; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

Table 3: Poverty rates (%) at the US\$5.50-a-day poverty line, by region, 1990–2018

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
East Asia and Pacific	95.1	93.1	89.2	86.8	79.7	71.3	63.4	51.9	38.0	34.3	31.2	28.2	25.0
Europe and Central Asia	25.8	36.4	39.7	45.5	35.4	26.5	16.8	15.0	13.7	13.9	13.3	12.6	11.9
Latin America and the Caribbean	49.9	49.5	48.3	47.3	45.4	41.0	33.2	29.5	26.6	26.0	25.6	23.1	22.6
Middle East and North Africa	59.3	60.8	61.2	54.8	52.9	49.6	46.7	42.1	41.4	42.0	42.1	43.4	45.0
South Asia	95.5	95.3	94.1	—	93.1	91.3	90.2	87.0	83.4	—	—	—	—
Sub-Saharan Africa	89.3	91.2	90.8	91.0	90.9	90.2	88.6	87.4	86.4	86.3	86.4	86.1	86.0
Rest of the world	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3

Source: World Bank, 2020, 63; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool), <http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

Table 4: Number of poor (millions) at the US\$5.50-a-day poverty line, by region, 1990–2018

	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
East Asia and Pacific	1,526.6	1,559.0	1,550.8	1,561.8	1,474.1	1,351.8	1,229.4	1,026.8	769.0	699.8	640.9	583.0	519.8
Europe and Central Asia	119.4	170.6	186.2	213.8	165.6	124.3	79.1	71.7	66.5	67.4	64.9	62.0	58.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	218.4	228.5	234.7	240.6	241.0	226.4	190.1	174.8	162.6	160.5	159.9	145.6	143.9
Middle East and North Africa	135.3	149.4	160.1	151.5	154.4	152.5	151.3	143.9	149.7	154.7	157.9	165.3	174.5
South Asia	1,083.0	1,152.5	1,212.0	–	1,343.0	1,386.7	1,435.2	1,445.2	1,440.2	–	–	–	–
Sub-Saharan Africa	454.9	504.1	543.7	590.0	637.4	684.9	729.3	780.1	837.4	859.5	883.0	904.7	927.1
Rest of the world	14.8	15.7	14.9	12.8	12.6	12.8	12.0	13.3	14.6	15.0	14.9	14.0	14.0

Source: World Bank, 2020, 63; based on PovcalNet (online analysis tool),

<http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/>, licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).